A JOURNALWOMAN IN THE TRENCHES AROUND MANILA

PHOTO BY THORS

MURIEL BAILEY

Fun, Feasting and Death On the "Firing Line" as Seen by the Only Woman With Our Troops in the Philippines.

THIS is an unusual story. It is the report of Miss Muriel Bailey, who was detailed by the Journal to the Philippines. She was there at the first fierce uprise at Manila and remained there until the fall of Caloocan. She carried her own revolver, and was the only woman on the "firing line." She saw the guns from the Charleston hurl shots off Malabon, and she stanched the wounds of the soldiers being carried along by Singalon. She also spent a day and a night with the American soldiers in the trenches in front of Caloocan, after its capture. She was not only on the field of battle with the dead, but she was in the heat of battle with the quick. Her pictures of death and destruction are vivid. So are her pictures of fun and feasting in camp. It is all from a woman's standpoint. It is unique; it is interesting; it is history.

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BY MISS MURIEL BAILEY.

IN THE ARMY TRENCHES BEFORE CALOOCAN.—"Low bridge!" sang out a dozen voices from wall and lookout turret.

Two hundred heads ducked simultaneously.

Mauser bullets grazed past, falling like hail on the unresisting brown earth and tearing unsightly holes in the shelter tents.

"Never touched us!" yelled those incorrigible Americans as they bobbed their heads up over the wall again and gazed down over the stretch of open to the line of woods where the enemy lurked and skulked.

"At 'em again with pepper"—and the rat-tat-tat of Yankee rifles.

Another volley, and again the cry of "Low bridge."

That time they hit a Pennsylvanian, but he only lost a bit of skin from his arm. He laughed lightly over it. He climbed up with the rest and mocked the enemy to try again and do better.

And I am here with them—our boys in blue—with them in the trenches, while they are peppering away at the niggers in revenge for the dead and wounded Yankee braves killed in the Philippines.

I have been here roundabout Manila for a month now. I heard the first serious mutterings of the outbreak, saw the first attack begun at the dawn of day and heard and saw the Charleston's guns off Malabon and Caloocan hurling shells into the woods. I saw the charge of the gallant Californians upon Paco Church, and I was present at the battle of Caloocan. I have seen soldiers die and cartloads of dead and dying, and I have stanched their wounds. I have often had to dodge and duck the Mauser bullet, and last night, after all I have done and gone through, it sung me to sleep in the trenches where I have spent twenty-four hours under shelter of the Star-Spangled Banner.

We had supper at 6 o'clock—in the trenches. We filed around to the front of the church and stood under the Red Cross while we read the signs on tombstones and held our plates for beans and cups for coffee. We had steak, too, broiled over the glowing coals of the camp fires, and canned things, and the only good bread I have tasted since I came here—excepting on board the ships.

Eating Beans Under Bullets.

The boys in blue ate heartily and laughed heartily and looked happy. Most of them have grown beards, for they can't shave at the front very well, and it gives them a rough and ready look that agrees with them. And they didn't mind the bullets that sailed past them a bit. They ate contentedly, but they suggested that I move four or five times each time as I got interested in the beans.

After supper everybody sits in front of the shelter tents to spin yarns, while the outpost shoulders his rifle and marches silently out to his place of danger. He is likely to be driven in during the night, and he comes stumbling into camp with expressions not learned in Sabbath school, but then he wasn't taught outpost duty there, either. And he is very likely not to get back to camp at all if any grave danger presents itself before the others can be alarmed. It is more pleasant to curl up in your blanket and go to sleep.

Melody in the Trenches.

After the last outpost has passed to his position, 300 yards in advance, the moon comes up into view, flooding the whole valley with mellow light. It doesn't seem warlike, for the boys sing softly the old home favorites and the air is soft and balmy, but the sounds of firing came again from the trees along the line.

Some of us hurried to the wall.

"Rubber, rubber!" shouted those who were too indolent to get up.

One can't even see the smoke from the rifles. The shadows of the trees hide that.

Once only during this night which I spent in the Utah Battery camp was there any hint of excitement. The firing was very heavy on the far left, and Aguinaldo's useless artillery was shooting red balls up into the softly lighted air. The Third Artillery fired one volley and then was silent. But it seemed to us, as we peered anxiously into the shadows of the burnt woods, that the enemy was in the rear of our lines. We watched for an hour, even looking through our glasses to aid our imaginations, and discussing the result, if it were so—for the line is so thin that it would have to break, and the way to the city would be open.

Lulled to Sleep by Mausers.

At 9 o'clock the bugler sounded taps—that sweetest and saddest of all the bugle calls. Over the hills and across the valleys it echoed in the soft moonlight and came back to us from the other buglers like sounds from another world. We lay down to sleep with the memory of that in our hearts and the sounds of singing bullets in our ears. After awhile these bullets become like human voices—they seem such real things and they make themselves familiar with their weird little death songs. At a late hour this firing ceased and we all woke up.

"Wonder what's happened?" some one said, drowsily.

"Smoking cigarettes," some one else answered.

And then we slept again.

It wasn't daylight when I woke up again to the call of the bugle. It was very dark and the air was chilly. Away off I could hear a few stray shots.

"They peppered away all night," I heard some one say, as he dressed hurriedly. "Wonder how many they killed?"

"Must have loads of ammunition," another answered.

"Wow! there goes one. She was a terror!"

"No," the other insisted, "that was a high soprano on a trill."

Daybreak in the Trenches.

So they laughed and joked and got into their clothes and out into the air. Then they called the roll outside of my tent door and that day every one in that camp answered "Here."

Presently the outposts came in, tired and sleepy and hungry, and they all answered "Here."

"Any excitement?"

"Not a bit," they said. "Once I thought they were trying their game on again when they were so still, but they didn't come out of their hiding places. I wish they would. I'd like to shoot a dozen of them!"

Presently a soft light stole in through my tent flaps and I got up. The air was heavy with the breath of the earth and filled with pleasant noises—all human, for the birds never sing here when the dawn comes up. The breakfast of chickens and eggs and steaming coffee just as the sun came slowly up over the crest of the dark hills and sent golden gleams into the shadowy corners made life in the trenches seem an almost glorious existence for the moment. Only the mosquitoes are thick and there are no pillows, and a gopher is likely to come up out of a grave and investigate your surroundings. And behind all these trivialities there was such a black, terrible reality!

Bullets from Bamboos.

Even this morning they have just taken three wounded men away from here, near the Caloocan cemetery and just behind the Montana camp. The insurgents are 300 yards to our front in a clump of trees, and there's a sharpshooter up in a bamboo the other side of the railroad track keeping up a steady fire near the train and the hospital. Now and then the bullets fly so fast and thick that every one has to crouch down and lie still a few moments while the things sing over your head and make you afraid to speak.

Now and then, too, the insurgents come to the edge of the brush and call names. It is really absurd and childish, but it makes the American soldier wildly angry. The harsh voice of the Filipino after he has uttered some unusually vile saying as he laughs seems to bring out all the rage these boys possess. The natives, too, have gotten the calls, and they shout:

"Load! Aim! Fire!"

And then they laugh inordinately and yell their one other English word, "Gangway;" and after that they fire steadily for a few minutes with such royal good will and bad aim that every one gets out of the way of an accident.

Silently Dropping Dead in the Sunlight.

It does make one's blood boil to see a strong, manly fellow crossing the way in the full light of the sun, whistling oftentimes and taking firm, free steps—a picture of health and manliness—and then to see him fall suddenly and lie still, all his strength gone in a breath. You can't help wanting to fight after that, even if you're a woman. It fills you with a hatred and longing for revenge that is almost an exaltation.

One death like this is a tragedy. But think of a cartload of your own dead. It was while working up from Manila to see the big battle that had to come and long before I got into the trenches that I first saw this dreadful sight. It was at Singalon.

The Dead in Carts.

It is a cruel sight—one that sends tremors into your very soul and makes you catch your breath with pain. The cart had two wheels and one horse, and it seemed to balance with the evenness and stiffness of its load. They are laid very straight, the dead, four to a cart, head upon feet on one side and feet upon head on the other. A white canvas was thrown over them, and with the jolting of the cart it slipped from bare head and feet, and sometimes from the hands that were folded forever.

All the way from Singalon to Malate we had met these carts until I grew to shut my eyes from the horror, and all along the way we met the wounded being carried in, as patient and uncomplaining as their litter-bearers. The Tennessee Battalion, weary and dusty from its twelve hours in the trenches without food, came along the narrow road, cheering and content. I think these Southern lads were born into fighting.

Sunset Over a Field of Blood.

Those Malate trenches were marvels of the art of war. Dug four feet deep into the earth and the earth piled to five feet high with bamboo planted six inches apart along the tops. Heaven pity our boys if there had been fighters in those trenches. We would not have one chance in fifty. "Come and see what they were like," said an officer.

I climbed up the loose earth and looked down. Oh, the pity of it! Women were not made for the sights of war. Four of the enemy lay there stark and dead. Turning back I stumbled over another, and looking across to a native hut I saw them all about faces to earth and sky, hands severed from shoulders and arms thrown out from bodies. Just as they fell they lay, some with necks twisted so that their heads were partially under their shoulders.

The sun was setting in a sky of flame and over a field of blood.

For days I had awaited with alternate hope and dread for the Caloocan battle, which I had come way out here to see at all hazards of the die. I was to see it inside fifty hours.

There was resting and intrenching for two days, and impatience to be up and at 'em again among the American boys, whom I was following. A happier, healthier lot of men never slept under the stars with the green earth for a pillow. There was no more longing

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